

Message Text

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ACTION EB-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 NEA-06 ISO-00 XMB-02 CAB-02 CIAE-00

COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00

L-01 MC-01 DRC-01 /034 W

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1713

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

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BEIRUT FOR RCAA DWOR

BRUSSELS FOR FAA

DEPT PASS COMMERCE FOR COHEN; EXIM BANK FOR YOUNG

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, SY

SUBJ: CIVIL AVIATION: CALL ON SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES

1. RCAA/BEIRUT AND ECONOFF CALLED ON SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINE (SAA) OFFICIALS NASIR ZARIF MOUHREZ, ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER, AND ABDALLA BADAWI, DEPUTY TECHNICAL MANAGER, TO RE-ESTABLISH SAA/USG CONTACT AFTER SEVEN-YEAR HIATUS.

2. RCAA REVIEWED MERITS OF US-MANUFACTURED AIRCRAFT AND RECENT SALES OF DC-10 (AIR SIAM, CHINA AIRLINES), L-1011 (GULF AIR, SAUDIA), CAPABILITIES OF THESE AIRCRAFT AND L-1011-200, AND GROWING FAMILY OF 727'S. SAA OFFICIALS APPRECIATED VISIT, NOTED WIDE-BODIED AIRCRAFT
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DECISION STILL PENDING BUT PERHAPS COULD BE MADE AS

SOON AS FOUR WEEKS. WE ASKED ABOUT ABORTED DC-10
DEMONSTRATION FLIGHT IN JULY (BEIRUT 8261 AND PREVIOUS).
OFFICIALS EXPRESSED REGRET FLIGHT HAD BEEN CANCELLED BY
DOUGLAS, BUT CONCEDED SAA LETTER TO DOUGLAS NOTING DC-10
OUT OF RUNNING HAD INDEED BEEN SIGNED BY SAA DIR-GEN
AHMAD ANTAR'S DEPUTY AND SENT TO DOUGLAS JUST BEFORE
FLIGHT CANCELLATION.

3. SAA LOAD FACTOR PUT AT 63 PER CENT FOR FULL YEAR
AND 80 PER CENT FOR LAST THREE MONTHS. (COMMENT: THIS
INDICATES CAPACITY SHORTFALL AND OFFICIALS ADMITTED SAA
HAD BEEN TURNING AWAY CUSTOMERS.)

4. BADAWI STATED IDEAL SAA FLEET WOULD BE THREE
WIDE-BODIED AIRCRAFT AND 727-200 OR PROJECTED 727-300
AS REPLACEMENT FOR FOUR OBSOLESCE SAA
CARAVELLES. BADAWI ALSO NOTED SAA MIGHT WANT TO PURCHASE
BOTH TYPES OF AIRCRAFT IN RELATIVELY SIMULTANEOUS TIME
PERIOD, RATHER THAN BUYING CARAVELLE REPLACEMENTS LATER.

5. SAA OFFICIALS COULD NOT YET COMMENT ON CHANGES THAT
MIGHT OCCUR IN SAA ORGANIZATION OR MANAGEMENT AS RESULT
OF SHIFTING AIRLINE UNDER NEWLY ORGANIZED MINISTRY OF
TRANSPORT FROM MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. THEY NOTED "AT
PRESENT" GEN. ASAD MOKAYYED IS STILL CHAIRMAN OF SAA,
AND SARG SPECIAL AIRCRAFT SELECTION COMMITTEE UNDER VICE
MINISTER OF DEFENSE/AIR FORCE COMMANDER GEN NAJI JAMIL
CONTINUES AS PREVIOUS CONSTITUTED.

6. RCAA IS INFORMING BOEING, DOUGLAS, AND LOCKHEED
BEIRUT REPS OF ABOVE.
MURPHY

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